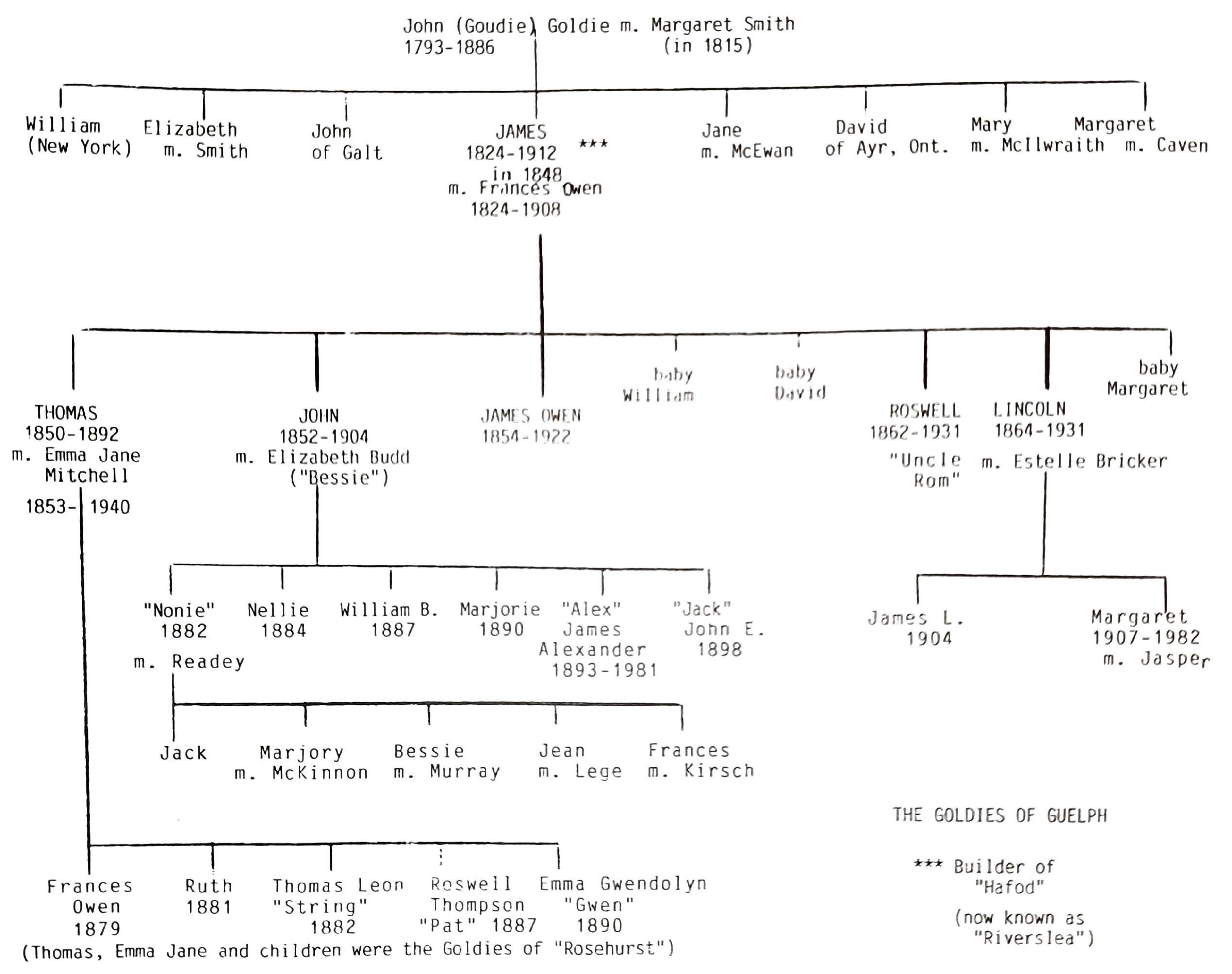


A SOCIAL HISTORY OF RIVERSLEA

by M. Ruth Tatham

M. Ruth Tatham



John (Goudie) Goldie m. Margaret Smith
1793-1886
(in 1815)
William
(New York)
Elizabeth
m. Smith
John
of Galt
JAMES
1824-1912 ***
in 1848
m. Frances Owen
1824-1908
Jane
m. McEwan
David
of Ayr, Ont.
Mary
m. McIlwraith
Margaret
m. Caven
THOMAS
1850-1892
m. Emma Jane
Mitchell
1853-1940
JOHN
1852-1904
m. Elizabeth Budd
("Bessie")
JAMES OWEN
1854-1922
baby
William
baby
David
ROSWELL
1862-1931
"Uncle
Rom"
LINCOLN
1864-1931
m. Estelle Bricker
baby
Margaret
"Nonie"
1882
m. Readey
Nellie
1884
William B.
1887
Marjorie
1890
"Alex"
James
Alexander
1893-1981
"Jack"
John E.
1898
James L.
1904
Margaret
1907-1982
m. Jasper
Jack
Marjory
m. McKinnon
Bessie
m. Murray
Jean
m. Lege
Frances
m. Kirsch
THE GOLDIES OF GUELPH
*** Builder of
"Hafod"
(now known as
"Riverslea")
Frances
Owen
1879
Ruth
1881
Thomas Leon
"String"
1882
Roswell
Thompson
"Pat" 1887
Emma Gwendolyn
"Gwen"
1890
(Thomas, Emma Jane and children were the Goldies of "Rosehurst")
MRT '83



"Hafod" in the early Goldie era; note the separate arched windows in the "library" on main floor. Sunroom and kitchen wing not yet constructed. Tracks on the roadway indicate a team of horses pulled the vehicle.

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF RIVERSLEA

It stands on the lea of a river, the Speed River, of Guelph, Ontario. It is built of stone, great red-brown blocks of stone, called by some people "granite", termed by other people to be of "brownstone". For many years, the people of Guelph said it was built of stone quarried from a granite mine in Dumfrieshire in Scotland. Admittedly, at one point in the mid-1970's, one of its residents was a little lady with a Scottish accent, a lady whose father had once been the quarry-master of a granite mine in that shire in Scotland, and it would have been a delightful paradox had it been possible to prove the stone came from that quarry! The lady in question by this time had lost her memory of almost everything, and could not help. The person who could help was a grandson of the house's builder. The grandson was James Alexander Goldie, better known as "Alex", born in another house in Guelph in 1893, but alert mentally and able to tell us with total conviction in 1979 that Riverslea was built from stone his grandfather imported from northern New York State!

Certainly, these red stones never came from the countryside around Guelph or Rockwood, Ontario!

On this site, there was an original log house. No authentic photo of that house remains, but there is one photo possibly of it, in existence. In those days, the Speed was a mighty river, rushing along within its banks, swelled to flood proportions in many a spring. Bridges, including a pedestrian bridge at approximately this level, were

thrown across its face, and when it was dammed, there was a goodly body of water. As the woods upstream were cut away, the river dwindled because there was no rush from melting snow, and people of today may smirk at the misnomer, the "Speed" River!

There was a broad level sweep of land where the old log house stood, and James Goldie decided to build his dream house on this site. The house was erected in 1890-1891, at a cost of about $60,000 ... a princely sum for those days. Mr. Goldie, who had been born on November 6, 1824, at Monkwood Grove in Ayrshire, Scotland, was now an old man, but remembered the stone of Scotland, and decided to produce a house which would remind him of those long-ago times. His wife, Frances Owen, born in Montgomeryshire in Wales on May 31, 1824, had come to the United States at the age of 16, but could remember stone houses as they had been in Wales. She had met and married James Goldie in 1848 in New York City, where brownstone houses were the trademark of the established wealthy. Thus, in their old age, both the Goldies might see Riverslea as a reminder of bygone grandeur in formal houses.

Mr. Goldie was a wealthy man; he had come from Scotland to New York in 1842, and had gone on to Paterson, New Jersey, where among other things, he had worked as estate manager for Roswell L. Colt (still remembered as the inventor of the Colt .45 revolver). There, he imported nursery stock, Jersey cattle, swans and pheasants. He is credited with being the first importer of English sparrows to North America! James and Frances Goldie and their three sons had then moved to Utica, New York, to learn flour-milling from Frances' brother; the opportunity to use this milling knowledge lured James to come to Guelph, Ontario, in 1860, with his wife and older children, Thomas, John, and James Owen.

The "Big House" of the Goldies....
who liked bowler hats, dogs, moustaches,
and picnics.



Thomas (born in Paterson, New Jersey, about 1850), John (born in the same city in 1852), and James Owen (also born in Paterson in 1854), formed a fine family for the Goldies. There was sorrow just prior to their leaving Paterson, because two more little boys, William and David, had been born and had died there; the first lived two and a half weeks in 1856, the second lived only two days in 1857. Perhaps these tragedies were one of the precipitants for the Goldies to join some previous members of the family who had come to the Guelph-Ayr-Galt area of Ontario.

To go back a generation in the family, John Goldie was born "John Goudie" on March 21, 1793, in Kirkoswold, Ayrshire, Scotland. The family name was spelled "Goudie" which is a Scottish pronunciation of "Goldie", the metal "gold" being called "goud". For some reason, John changed the spelling and pronunciation, and his descendants have kept the Anglicized form ever since.

On June 18, 1815 (the day of the Battle of Waterloo!), John Goldie married Margaret Smith, the daughter of a famous botanist. John Goldie himself became an even more famous botanist and toured Southern Ontario and many other parts of North America, between 1817 and 1819, describing botanical specimens, and attempting to take some of them back to Scotland. Subsequently, in the 1830's, he was sent twice to Tzarist Russia as one of the botanists responsible for setting out the formal gardens at the Tzar's Summer Palace in St. Petersburg (later Leningrad).

John and Margaret Goldie had come to North America in 1844 and settled at Ayr, Ontario; all eight of their children came to this continent, though not all at the same time and not all directly to the Ontario area. William, the eldest, never married, but continued

to live in New York State ... carrying on in his father's tradition, as the gardener of note, and as a Presbyterian. He had come to North America before his parents (as had "our" James of later Guelph fame) and seems to have established himself separately. Eventually, he was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, in Westchester County, New York (a coincidence in that his brother, James Goldie, was later buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Guelph, Ontario!). John and Margaret Goldie appear to have brought with them their daughter Elizabeth, born in Ayrshire, Scotland about 1820 (and married in Canada to Sydney Smith; she died in 1854), and their son John, also born in Ayrshire, in 1823. He and most of his brothers and sisters came with the parents to Ayr, Ontario in 1844 to a house known as "Greenfield", a squarely-built brick Victorian home, later well-known to people of the area. A mill (known as "Greenfield Mill") brought prosperity to John, Sr., but botany remained his life-long avocation. John Goldie, Jr., was one of the partners who in 1859 formed the Goldie-McCulloch firm of Galt, Ontario.

As we have seen, James, the third son (born in Scotland on November 6, 1824) had come to New York in 1842, two years before most of the family emigrated from Scotland to Ontario.

With Elizabeth and John, the parents probably brought Jane (born in Scotland in 1828, later to marry Andrew McEwan and produce seven children, and to die in 1862 near Ayr, Ontario). As well, sister Margaret, born in Scotland in December of 1836, must have come with the parents in 1844 as must have David, who had been born in Scotland in 1852, and Mary who had been born in Scotland in 1834. Margaret married William Caven, who became famous in his own right, as the principal of Knox College at the University of



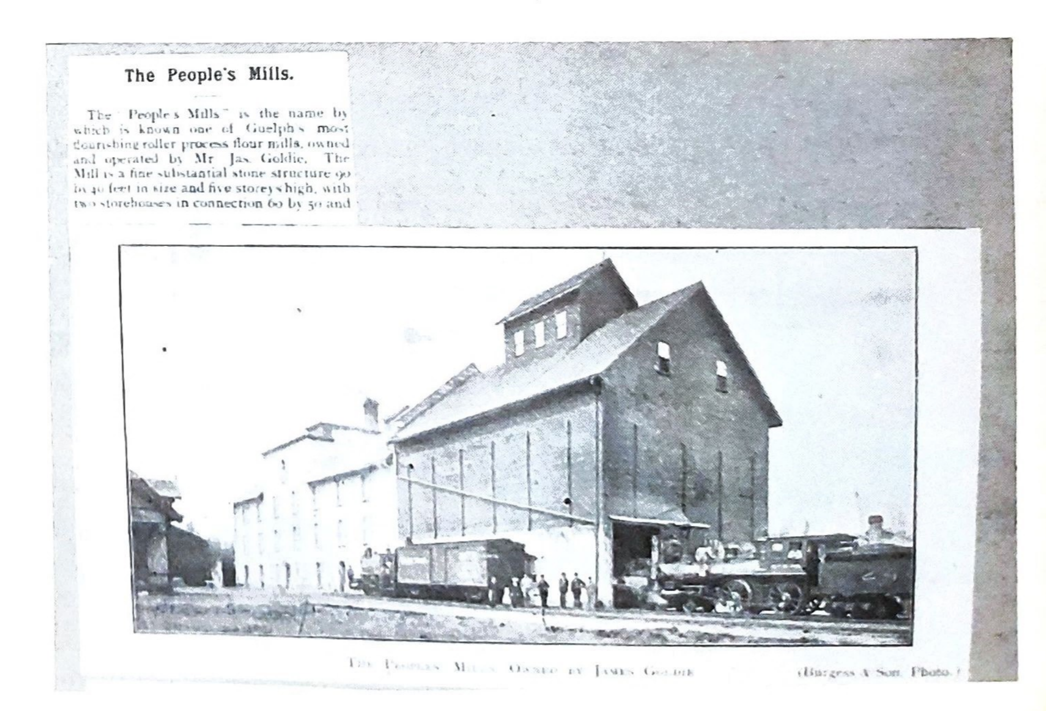
The Botanist,
John Goldie,
1793 - 1886



When Riverslea was built, its neighbour,
The Homewood Retreat, looked like this.



Goldie's fern
Dryopteris Goldiana
4'. Deciduous. Non-spreading. Moist shade. Largest of woodferns, which include useful evergreen Dryopteris intermedia, the florist fern (picked in summer, kept in cold storage), and D. marginalis



The People's Mills.

The "People's Mills" is the name by which is known one of Guelph's most flourishing roller process flour mills, owned and operated by Mr Jas. Goldie. The Mill is a fine substantial stone structure 90 by 40 feet in size and five storeys high, with two storehouses in connection 60 by 50 and

THE PEOPLES' MILLS, OWNED BY JAMES GOLDIE (Burgess & Son, Photo.)

Toronto. Mary married a Mr. McIlwraith.

David, who was a boy of twelve at the time the family settled in Ayr, Ontario, was later to marry (his wife was very active in the movement for vote for women) and together they produced ten children, seven sons and three daughters, one of whom, Theresa (born about 1886) is an elderly lady, widowed twice, and now living in a nursing home in Toronto, able to recount her branch of the family history, although she is blind. David stayed on in Ayr, as head of that part of the family, until his death in 1894. He and his descendants lived in a large home called "The Gore", which towered its brick walls over the lawns and woods in the Ayr district. Some time later, its top stories were removed and it was used as a bungalow for his widow and the youngest members of the family.

James Goldie came then on his own, with his wife, Frances Owen Goldie, to the Guelph area from Utica New York, in 1860. When they had met and married in New York in 1848, James may have been in some business with his older brother William, perhaps from his 1840 arrival there. Certainly, as we have seen, he and wife Frances were in Paterson, New Jersey, for the birth of their early children from 1850 to 1857.

Although always very interested in horticulture, botany, and gardening of all forms, his business interests in Ontario centered mostly on milling of flour. He was also on the Board of Directors of the Gore Mutual Fire Insurance Company, of Galt (from 1873 to 1912) and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Guelph General Hospital (and at one time its Chairman). He was a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society of England, and the founder of the Guelph Horticultural Society. He was always an active

worker in the Congregational Church and at one time was a president of the Canadian Flour Millers' Association.

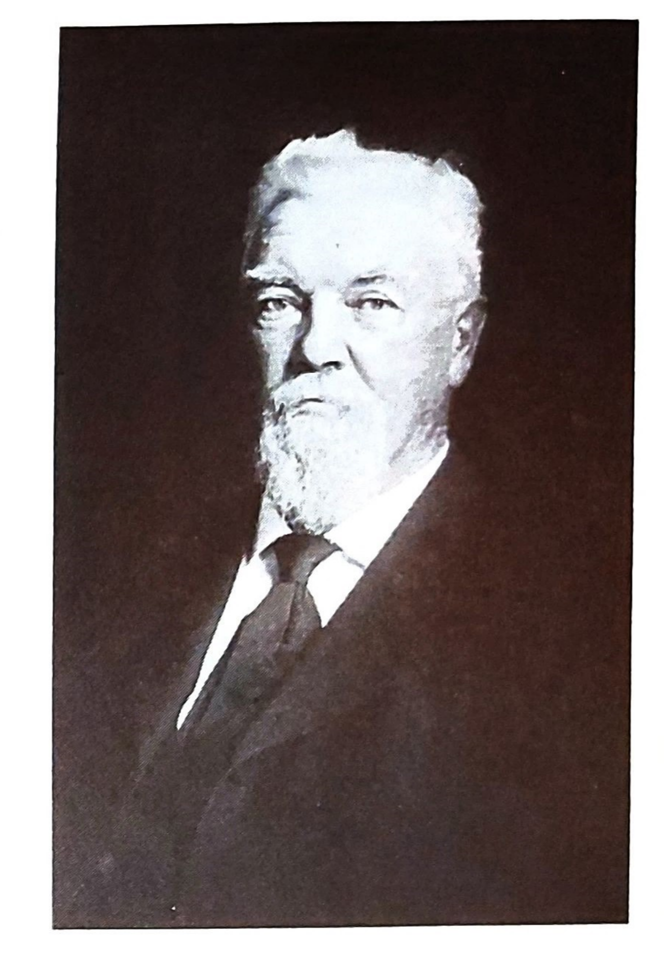
James Goldie appears to have purchased a site from William Hood, part of the Hood Farm, on which stood a barrel-stave factory and sawmill. He built a flour mill which was ready for operation in 1861 but was sold to John Pipe about 1866 (and thereafter known as Pipe's Mill). In 1883, the year that The Homewood Retreat was established, Mr. Pipe sold the mill to a Mr. G. P. Tolton, who two years later sold it to Mr. D. and Mr. E. Nicklin. This mill changed hands several times again until it was purchased in 1900 by James Simpson.

In the meantime, the Goldies, James and his sons, had gone on to establish a very successful flour mill on the Speed River on Cardigan Street near London Road (across the street from what is now known as The House of Bulbs). This was known as Goldie's Mill or later as the People's Mill, and the ruins remain.

There had been a saw mill on this site on Cardigan Street from 1827 to 1829. About 1837 Captain Henry Strange built a house on the property and operated the saw mill. The house, a long low building with arched windows and doorways in a latticed porch at the centre front, is well remembered in some photographs (usually with a little dark dog on the lawn!) still in existence, and by a painting which was in the possession of "Alex" Goldie and was given to Riverslea by his widow, Mrs. Marjorie Goldie. This house was occupied by James Goldie and his family from 1868 to 1891 (and was torn down about 1925). Thus this house, often called "Captain Strange's House" was home for James and Frances

The Builders of Riverslea

James Goldie, Senior
1824 - 1912



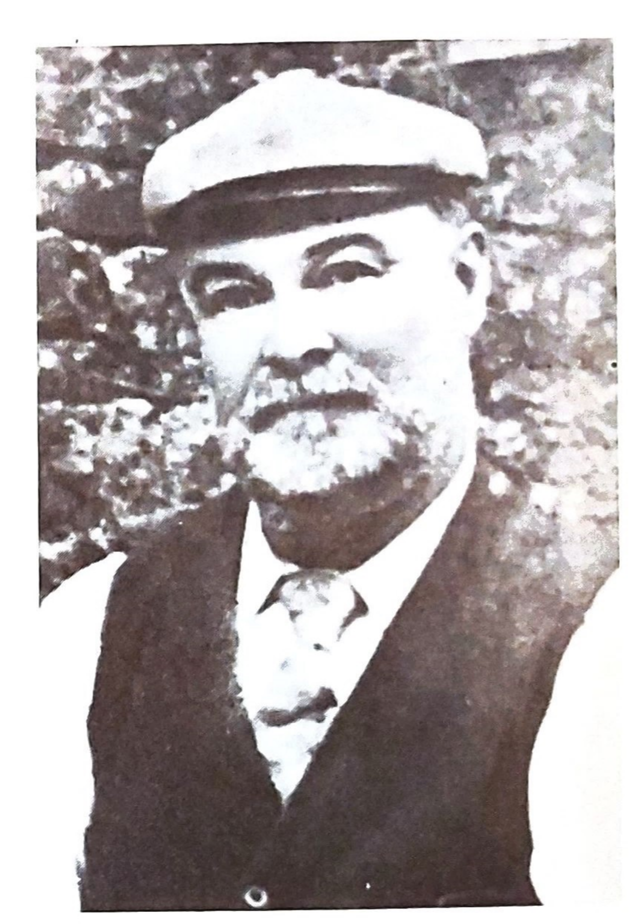


Frances Owen Goldie
1824 - 1908

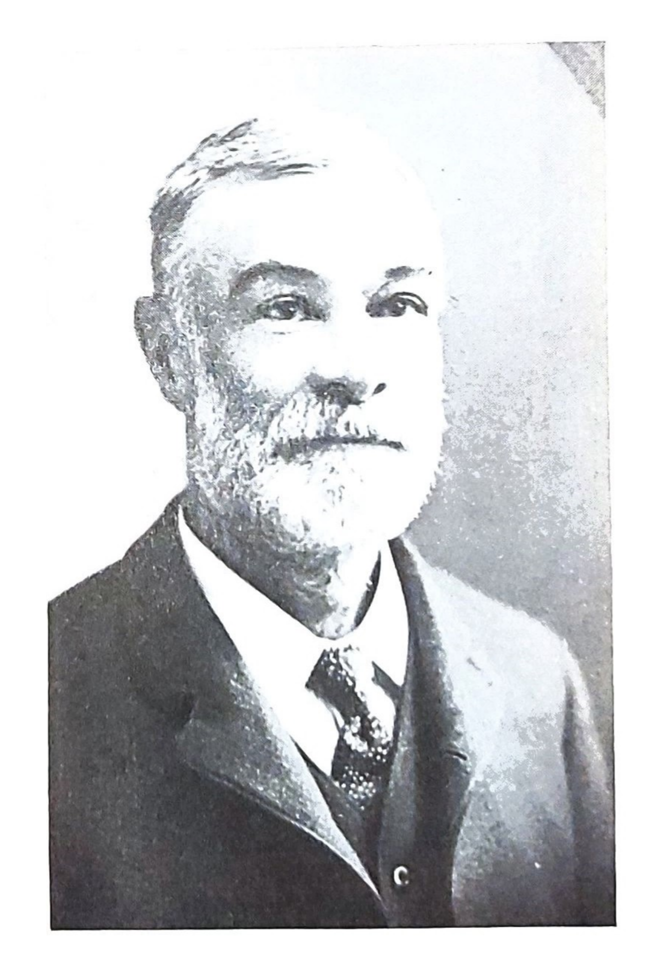
The Sons Born in Paterson, New Jersey



Thomas Goldie
?1850 - 1892

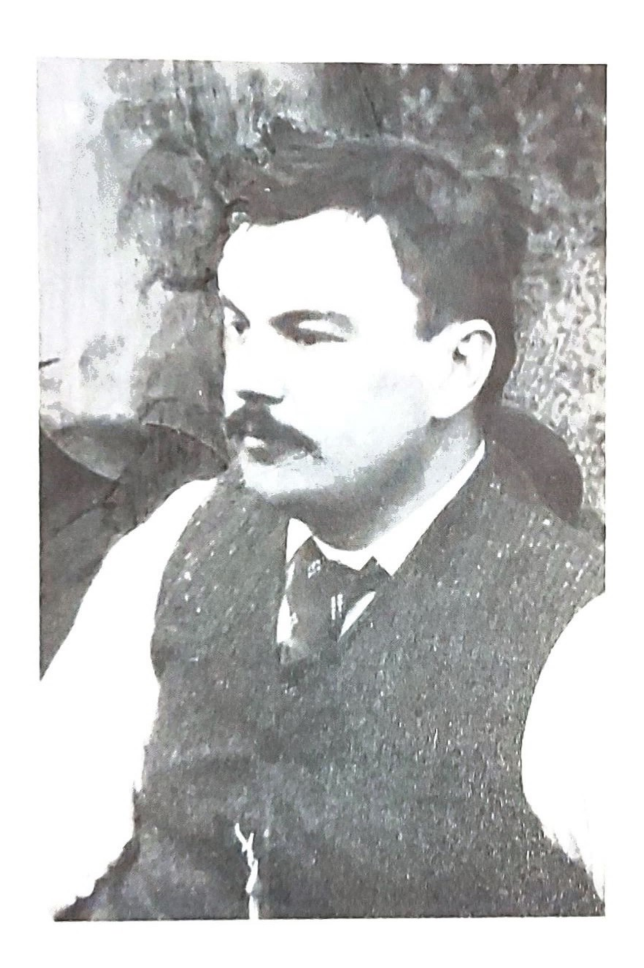


James Owen Goldie
1854 - 1922

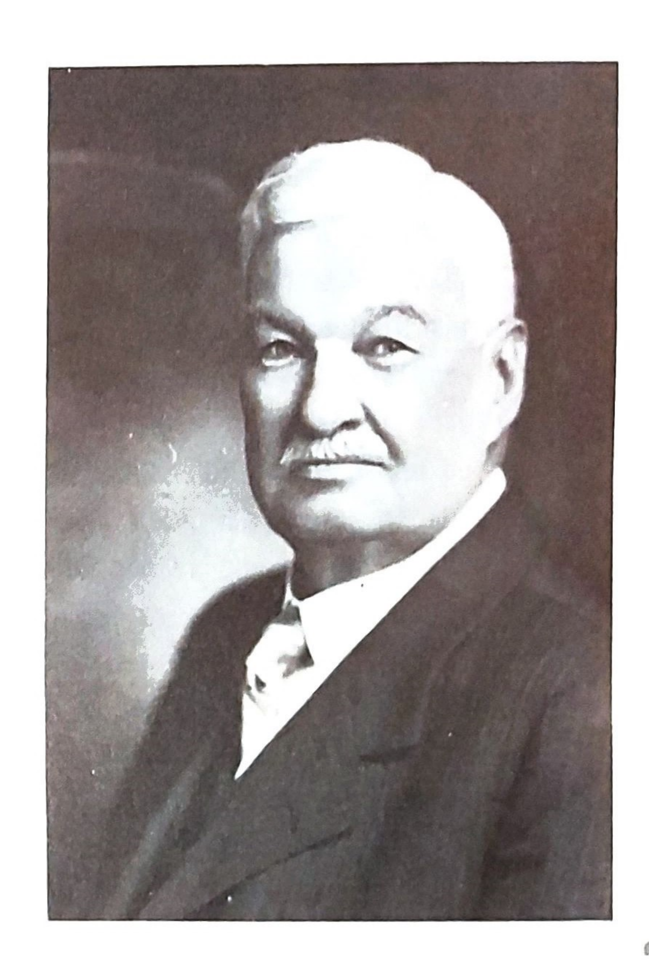


John Goldie
1852 - 1904
(Alex' father)

The Sons Born in Guelph,
Ontario



Roswell Goldie
"Uncle Rom"
1862 - 1931



Lincoln Goldie
1864 - 1931
(Jim's father)

Goldie and their children, Thomas, John, James Owen, and later Roswell, born in Guelph on March 26, 1862, and Lincoln, born in Guelph in 1864. Baby Margaret probably never saw this house, because she was born in Guelph on February 26, 1867, and died two weeks later, on March 11th.

About 1859, Dr. William Clarke (a physician, but perhaps better known as a businessman in Guelph) built a large limestone mansion quarried from Rockwood stone, on the hillside of the property which he owned between Delhi Street and the Speed River, adjacent to the land on which G. McKenzie Stewart constructed his magnificent stone home, shortly afterward. Stewart's home was subsequently purchased by Donald Guthrie, Q.C., and later sold to the group of businessmen who founded The Homewood Retreat in 1883. Dr. Clarke had been very active in the milling business, with other associates, from 1845, as owners of the "Wellington Mills". Amazingly, this appeared to be a frame mill and it burned during the time that Dr. Clarke was the Justice of the Peace. It was assumed by some people that this fire was the result of his decision in a Guelph feud and murder, but it may simply have been the combustion factor which took such toll in the grist mills in the whole area. In 1850 Dr. Clarke had rebuilt the Wellington Mills of stone, and called it the "People's Mill"; the mill was enlarged, turned over to new owners, and made into a tannery, saw mill, distillery, and piggery. That particular mill went brankrupt in 1860 (from over-extending itself?), and was taken over by another gentleman, until it was destroyed by fire in 1864. It was this property which was purchased in 1866 by James Goldie and became known as Goldie's Mill, or once again as the People's Mill.

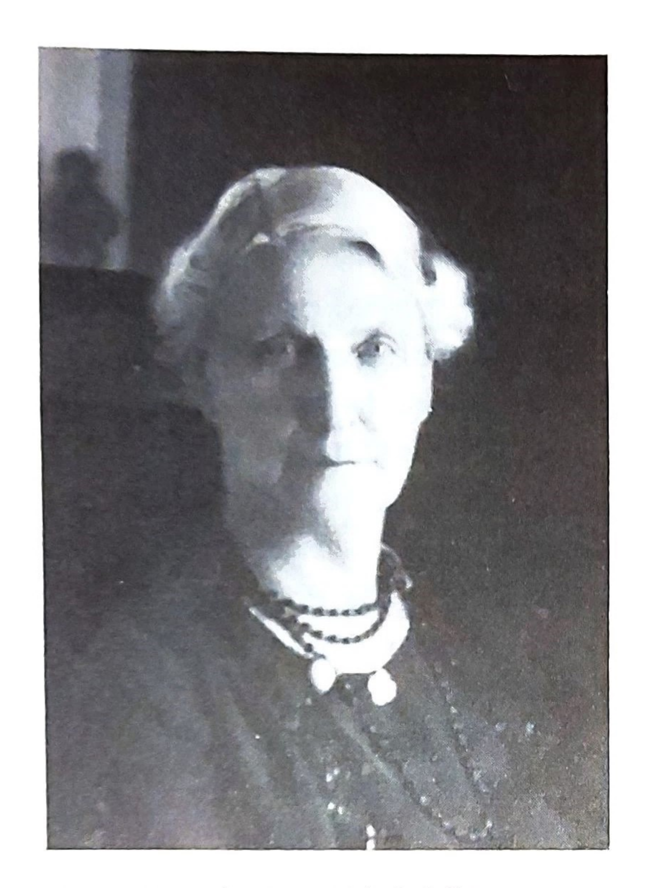
In the meantime, as stated, Dr. Clarke had built the magnificent home called "Rosehurst" of Rockwood limestone, on the Delhi Street hill. It faced toward the Speed River, which was classified as the front of the Stewart, later Guthrie, home, beside it. The Goldie family purchased the land from Dr. Clarke's estate after his death. His second wife had been one of the daughters of the famous heroine of the 1812 war, Laura Secord, and the city's first magistrate, "Squire" Strange, presumably the same "Captain Henry Strange" who had been in milling and whose low house was the first Goldie home by the People's Mill. Mrs. Clarke's daughter by a previous marriage, thus the step-daughter of Dr. Clarke lived on in her later years in Rosehurst.

Whether Thomas Goldie ever owned Rosehurst or whether it was always part of his father's holdings, is not evident. The official registry of land transfers for Guelph, states that John Mitchell conveyed property to James Goldie in 1869. Was "John Mitchell" related to Emma Jane Mitchell whom Thomas Goldie married in 1877? Emma Jane Mitchell had been born in Guelph on April 13th, 1853, and had lived in a house on the north end of Queen Street. She had two well-known brothers who were lawyers and businessmen in Guelph.

Together Thomas and Emma Jane moved into Rosehurst and lived there with their five children; Frances, born in 1879, later to become the darling of her aged grandparents (James Goldie,Senior and Frances Owen Goldie) and to take care of them in Riverslea in their last years, and to be remembered still by her cousin, lawyer James L. Goldie of Guelph, as "my favourite cousin"; Ruth, born in 1881; Thomas Leon, born in 1882 (and who died in 1916 of a disease contracted in World War I); Roswell Thompson, born in October, 1887, and known to all as "Pat" Goldie, and Emma Gwendolyn, born in April 1890, and known as "Gwen". Thomas Goldie was a well-known businessman in Guelph, a fine-looking man,



"Rosehurst" as it was when Tom and Emma Jane Goldie and their children lived there, at the same time as Riverslea was built. 1890-1891. The drive up from the gatehouse at the end of Arthur Street.



Emma Jane (Mitchell) Goldie, 1853-1940. The January, 1911, morning when Homewood burned down, she opened her home to 20 of its patients.

Rosehurst, 1859-1935



Rosehurst from across the Speed River

with the characteristic Goldie features of a large square head, a full head of hair, and a preference for a prominent moustache and an impressive beard. A big athletic man, Thomas Goldie was active in everything going on around the Guelph Area and became the mayor of Guelph in 1891. Shortly into his new term of office in 1892, he contracted a severe pneumonia, and died within a few days in the Guelph General Hospital. His widow, left with five children, the youngest of whom was less than two years of age, received an immense amount of sympathy from the shocked citizens of Guelph, but lived in some financial stringency. The Registry Office records that James Goldie had purchased seventeen acres of land from William Clarke's property on November 11, 1885, and that he had bought more land from Dr. Clarke "and others in trust" on July 28, 1887. Presumably this land, or part of it, was that land on which stood the Rosehurst house, which was then or soon afterward, inhabited by Thomas Goldie and Emma Jane Mitchell Goldie and their children. Thomas died in February 1892, as we have seen; on April 26, 1892, a mortgage for $5,000 was transferred by James Goldie to the Trustees of Emma Jane Goldie. Thus it would appear that "our" James Goldie, now a man of 67 was providing for his daughter-in-law and her children in the most practical way he could!

Eventually, when her children were grown, Emma Jane moved back to the Mitchell home at 250 Queen Street North. In the meantime, on January 6, 1911, when the Manor Building of The Homewood Sanitarium (as it was now called) was razed by an early morning fire, she offered Rosehurst, her big old home so close by, for housing for some of the patients that very day, and her offer was accepted before nightfall with gratitude ... and twenty patients moved in!

A watercolour painted by Emma Jane Mitchell Goldie, was given to Riverslea by Marjorie Goldie, Alex's widow, and restored by the Volunteer Association of Homewood, and now hangs on the wall of the interview room (the "Goldie Room") at Riverslea.

John Goldie, the younger brother of Thomas, married Elizabeth (Bessie) Budd in Guelph, with Aunt Margaret Caven's husband, the Reverend William, the Theological Professor from Knox College in Toronto, being the officiating clergyman. Bessie Budd Goldie is remembered by people at Riverslea through a small embroidered "cushion" which hangs on another wall of a sitting room there. It was among the mementoes of the Goldie family found in the effects of Miss Beatrix Tatham, who knew Mrs. Frances Owen Goldie and James Goldie Sr., Bessie Budd's father-in-law and mother-in-law, because as a child she and her grandmother (a Mrs. Goodeve), visited frequently with "Grandma Goldie" at Riverslea. Mrs. Goldie was actually no relation to Beatrix Tatham, but a "best friend" of Mrs. Goodeve, grandmother of the little Tatham girl. Born in March, 1887, Beatrix Tatham was a friend of many of the Goldies, male and female, of her generation ... and a 1911 dance program from the Ontario Agricultural College, which belonged to her, lists "R. Goldie" as one of her dance partners. Almost certainly this was Roswell Thompson ("Pat") Goldie, son of Thomas and Emma Jane Goldie.

John Goldie and Bessie Budd Goldie (who died in 1944!) had six children. These children have kept some connection to Riverslea, even to the present time. The eldest, Jenny Owen "Nonie", born in 1882, married John C. Ready, and two of their daughters, Jean Ready Lege of Texas, and Frances Ready Kirsch of Maryland, have visited Riverslea within the last three years. Another daughter, Bessie Ready Murray has visited, and has provided

The Goldie Fern


ASPIDIUM GOLDIANUM

MR. GOLDIE'S ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION

Sori subrotundi sparsi. *Indusium* unbilicatum vel uno latere dehiscens.

Aspidium *Goldianum*; frondibus ovato-oblongis glabris pinnatis, pinnis lanceolato-acuminatis pinnatifidis, laciniis oblongis spinuloso-serratis, stipite paleacco.

Hab. Near Montreal.

From one and a half to two feet in height. Allied to *Aspidium Cristatum* more than to any other species in the genus; but abundantly distinguishable by the greater breadth of the frond, which gives quite a different outline, and by the form of the pinnae, which are never *broader* at the base, but are, on the contrary *narrower* than several of the segments just above them. These segments, too, are longer and narrower, slightly falcate, and those of the lowermost pinnae are never lobed, but simply serrated at the margin. The serratures are likewise terminated by more decided, though short, spinules. The *fructifications* are central near the midrib, and this circumstance prevents the species from bearing, as it would otherwise do, no inconsiderable affinity to *A. marginale.*

Specimens of this plant, cultivated in the Botanic Garden at Glasgow, from roots which I brought from Canada, retain all the characters which I have above described.

Frances Kirsch with spores from the "Goldie fern", a famous and large but rare fern described by John Goldie, the original botanist who found it growing in the Montreal area. It also grew, presumably by transplanting, in the Riverslea area, and is now being reproduced by our Homewood Horticultural Therapist, Mitchell Hewson, through the gift of Bessie Murray and Frances Kirsch of those spores to Homewood. It is hoped that eventually it will be possible to grow these ferns again in the soil around Riverslea. How fascinating it would be if we could also have pheasants on the grounds, and black and white swans on the river, as did old James Goldie at the turn of this century!

A son of John and Bessie Goldie, William B. Goldie, has a son, Alex J. and Virginia, living in California, and they have been extremely helpful in providing materials for this book, along with other Goldie mementoes, as have their cousins (listed above).

Another son of John and Bessie Goldie, James Alexander "Alex" Goldie, was born September 19, 1893, and died October 30, 1981. It was his memories and personal interest in Riverslea, his grandparents, and members of the Tatham family, which prompted the writing of this book.

Born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1852, John Goldie (Alex's father) second son of James Goldie, Sr., died in 1904 in Guelph. He was a famous athlete as a youth; at age seventeen, he played outfielder in the Guelph Maple Leaf Baseball Team which won the Canadian Championship in 1869. He went on to football fame at University College in Toronto, but there suffered "a severe injury which was to plague him all his life". He joined his family's milling company but his health was poor in later years and he was only 52 at the time of his death. He was a violinist of some distinction and an ardent sports supporter.

The third son, James Owen Goldie, never married. He, then, was one of the Goldies to live a significant portion of his adult life at Riverslea.

It should be recognized that the name "Riverslea" is a relatively modern name applied to the house which the original builders, James and Frances Goldie called "Hafod", a Welsh name, whose exact name is disputed. A member of the British Embassy from Wales, in Boston, declared that "Hafod" meant "a protected place", or "a summer place". Personal friends in Wales who have checked the derivation say that there were two words used by families in Wales who had two homes. The summer home was usually high up in the mountains and was called "Havod". In the winter months these wealthy Welsh people would move to their other home in the sheltered valley and this was called "Hendrie" or winter home. In any event, whether "Hafod" was supposed to be the protected place, or the one on the hill (which it was <u>not</u> in the case of the Riverslea site!), the Welsh allusion must have had great meaning for Frances Owen Goldie. One reference states that "Hafod" meant "a beautiful dwelling" in Welsh ... perhaps the most apt for Riverslea!

Her son, Roswell Goldie, born in Guelph in 1862, was the fourth son to be involved in the Guelph milling business. Known as "Uncle Rom", he never married, and like his brother, James Owen, lived at the "big house" by the Speed River ... this was the manner in which the Goldies of that era and many of their friends referred to the house with the Welsh name! Roswell Goldie's remaining photographs of people and sites would indicate that he was an exceptionally fine photographer. Lincoln Goldie, born in Guelph in 1864, married Estelle Bricker of Waterloo in 1902. Vice-president of James Goldie Company (of which James Owen Goldie, his older brother was president, known as "President of



The Gatehouse at the
end of Arthur Street

Frances Owen Goldie and James Goldie,
beside Riverslea, with two of their
granddaughters, Frances and Gwen.

James Goldie Company Limited Flour Mills"), Lincoln Goldie went on to Parliament and became Provincial Secretary for Ontario. He and Estelle lived in the large limestone house on Queen Street, which is now an apartment building with two recumbent lions beside the front steps. Their children, James L. Goldie, well-known in Guelph as a recently-retired lawyer, and his sister Margaret Goldie Jasper, did not actually live in the lion house for any lengthy period of time but remember as "home" the previous house, just north of the First Baptist Church. Margaret, who died December 26, 1982 in Montreal, was the wife of world-famous Neurologist, Dr. Herbert Jasper; she leaves two children.

To return to "Hafod" ... the "big house" down by the river. It was said that it was constructed between 1890 and 1891 at a cost of "$60,000". Marble fireplaces were placed in nine of the rooms, four on the main floor, and five on the second storey. A tenth huge fireplace, with a wooden and marble facing, exists in the room known as "The Trophy Room" or "The Gun Room" which was added later onto the river side of the original house. All 10 fireplaces are still in existence, works of extreme beauty and complexity, each from Italian marble of a different colour. These fireplaces, and the Italian marble flooring, wall facing and stairs of the foyer, and main stairway, were installed by workmen brought from Italy especially to do this work. The foyer, in addition to the marble, boasts a terrazzo floor, of the type so beautifully made by Italian workmen, and presumably constructed from the chips of marble from the above fireplaces, stairs, and wall panelling.

Alex Goldie still had three small chairs and a table, Victorian in style, and not particularly elegant in nature, from his grandparents' furnishings at the "big house", when visited in his apartment in Barrie, Ontario, in 1980. He rememberd some of the original furnishings, including a very large dining room suite, which sat on bare wooden

floors, and was characterized in his memory by high straight-backed dining room chairs, very slippery to sit on, and a menace to little boys who would slide slowly forward, and tended to end up on the floor under the dining room table!

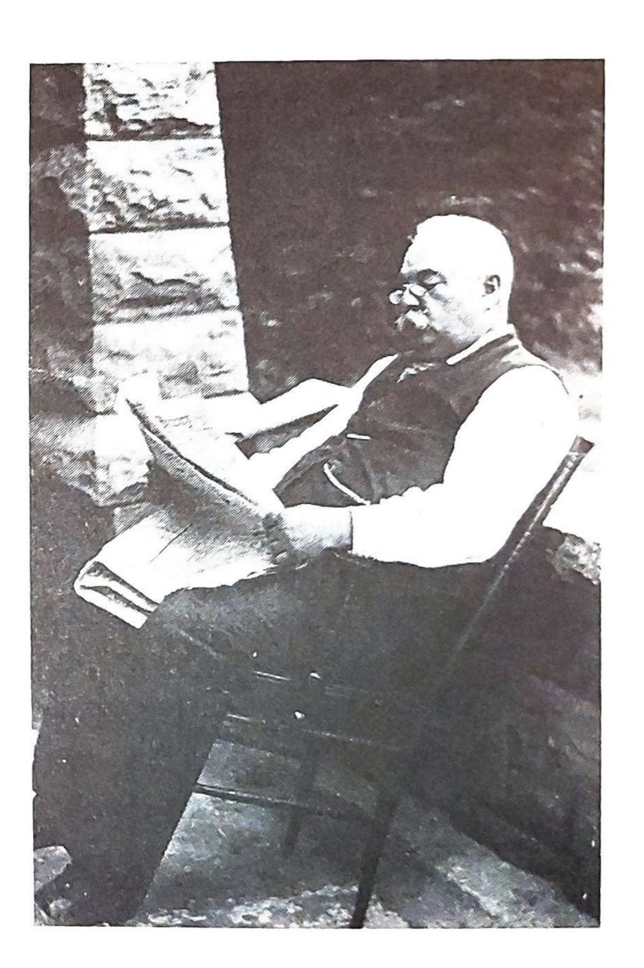
Alex Goldie had a lot of good memories of "Hafod", including wooden panelling in the library, the room to the right of the front foyer. He recalled an apiary at the back of the house, next to the river, and a huge round flower bed, which resembled a clock or pie cut into pieces. The birds and the flowers seemed to be a great focus of interest for James Goldie, his grandfather. Mr. Goldie, then an old man, rather stooped and not now too tall, but with a long white flowing beard and still maintaining the shock of white hair, pottered around the grounds, accompanied by various grandchildren. There was some kind of generating plant involved in the production of gas for use in the light fixtures (and perhaps some of the fireplaces) of the "big house". Alex Goldie could not remember a sun room at the west side of the house at the rear and it would appear from old photographs that this sun room was added at a significantly later date, perhaps during the time the Hall family lived in the house. Certainly the Trophy Room or Gun Room and the Sun Room would appear to be of a slightly different era of construction, although the stone matches remarkably well.

Alex Goldie remembered that the top floor of the house was used as quarters for one or two servants who lived with the family. Somewhere in the numerous bedrooms, his cousin Frances Goldie had her room during the years that she took care of her grandparents in that home.

Mrs. Goldie died January 16, 1908, at a great age and much respected; her husband, James Goldie, Sr., died on November 3, 1912, in the Guelph General Hospital, and was also

The southwest window of Riverslea's
"drawing room", as the Goldies saw it.

Bachelor James Owen Goldie
reads The Mercury outside
the window on the porch.



buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, in Guelph.

Within a few years it became obvious that the Goldie family had neither the financing nor the inclination to keep up such a big house, with the servants that would be required. Lincoln Goldie was established in the house on Queen Street, John Goldie was dead, and Thomas Goldie was dead. The bachelors James Owen Goldie and Roswell Goldie saw no reason to carry on, and moved to 11 Green Street, a well-appointed limestone house, still in existence on a now-reduced piece of land.

The house was then put up for sale, and it, with seventeen acres of land, was purchased by Francis (Frank) Hall and his wife, Flora C. Hall in January 1918, for $37,000. They came from Nottinghamshire in England, and were members of a family, the Halls, who had been great collectors of art objects. Apparently the Halls did not think of their art collections as a potential fortune, but rather as things of beauty, and as heirlooms which they handed down from generation to generation. For some reason, Mr. and Mrs. Hall decided to move to the general area of Hamilton, Ontario where there were relatives. Presumably this was because Flora Caroline Hamilton Hall had come originally from Hamilton.

When they left Park Hall, Mansfield, in Nottingham, England they left an absolute mansion, three times the size of Riverslea if its photo is to be judged. They did bring much of Park Hall's contents with them, in the form of "ten van loads" of furniture, heirlooms and art objects. They put these thousands of dollars of household goods, furniture, silverware, and paintings into "Riverslea" to which they apparently added at least a sun room, if not more of the wings which are now seen. Francis Hall died in March, 1928, ten years after moving into Riverslea. At the time that he died a value of $15,000 was placed on the contents; when his wife died in May, 1939, the same household

goods and heirlooms had increased to $19,500. By the time the auction of these goods took place in September of 1946, within Riverslea, and in a huge marquee tent placed on the lawn beside the large house, buyers flocked to the Guelph estate from all parts of Canada and the United States, and paid over $100,000 for items that the Halls had been collecting through the centuries. Pictures from the Ward-Price Catalogue (Ward-Price Limited is a well-known firm of auctioneers of valuable objects of art) would indicate that there were original paintings by Thomas Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds and other famous painters. There were pieces of furniture by Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and other renowned furniture makers, and there were many pieces of Georgian silver and glass, as well as Sheffield plate and linens and lace.

The Halls had nieces and nephews, but no direct descendants. Thus Riverslea, the beautiful redstone house, was up for sale, and The Homewood Sanitarium was the buyer. Negotiations with the Trustees of the Hall estate began in April, 1946 and Homewood took possession on October 15, 1946. The building and land were purchased from the Hall estate by Homewood at a cost of $45,000.

Some of the Hall furniture remained ... the brass chandelier with the Henry V style coronets on it, in the main room to the left of the foyer; the large dining room furniture with its exquisite hand-carving on table legs and on the server (and its buffet which is in the main building of The Homewood Sanitarium); and the marble bust in the front hall - these are the most significant reminders. This white marble bust, which sits on a high pedestal of gray marble, was sculpted in 1851 by E. H. Bailey, R.A., the sculptor who did the figure of Admiral Nelson in Trafalgar Square in London, England. We do not know her name, but the elegant young lady who sat for the marble bust was classified as "the third member of the Hall family".

The Halls who had sold their property in Nottinghamsh ire in 1914, thus inhabited Riverslea from 1918 until the death of the last survivor, Mrs. Flora C. Hall in the Spring of 1939.

During that time, part of the sixteen acres which the Halls purchased when they purchased the Riverslea home, saw another change. Some time after a fire in 1925, Rosehurst was demolished, and in spite of its tumbled down condition it presented a formidable difficulty to the workmen, because its basic construction was still very sound, sixty-five years after it had been built. The limestone was of the same vintage as that used in the large stone house up on the top of another Guelph hill, the house known as "Ker Cavan", and that Retirement Home has an extra wing even to this day, provided from Rosehurst stone. A walk up through the woods from the Gatehouse at the Arthur Street end of the Riverslea property, in the spring or summer, will give a careful observer a chance to see the remnants of the foundation of Rosehurst which in its day must have been one of the grandest homes in Guelph.

Homewood proceeded to use Riverslea as a Ward for long-term care of female patients. In late 1954, when financial times were difficult for Homewood, and the patient admission rate had dropped, Riverslea was closed for a few months, but about four months later it was necessary to open it again, to house further patients, and it has remained in continuous operation since that time.

By 1974 it became obvious that Riverslea was too important a property to be used simply as a "twilight Ward" for little old ladies to rock away the months from the vantage point of their rocking chairs. Accordingly, there had been a planned renovation and up-dating, which we effected through careful architectural changes in 1981 and the

early part of 1982. Every attempt was made to save every single bit of beautiful marble and wood carving, even to the last inch of beading in door panels. Where a door had to be moved, the same beautiful door was used in another site thus, both the exterior and the interior of Riverslea retained much of their original beauty and historical significance, while having up-dating of plumbing, and other facilities necessary for modern care of both psychiatric and medical problems. A new wing and enclosed circular stair were placed on the rear (on the east and north side of the building), enabling a modern nursing station and separate medication dispensary to be incorporated, and allowing the removal of the ugly and inappropriate metal fire escape which has been on the river side of the building for many years. It has also been possible to meet Fire Marshall's regulations now so that the third storey can be used for patients' bedrooms.

Several years prior to the 1981-1982 renovations, a large portion of the basement was renovated from coal-bins, to form an excellent craft room and non-smoking lounge, as well as a staff locker room and washroom, and a laundry area with automatic washer and dryer for patients' use. Separate entrances, for efficiency and as a fire precaution are now available on all sides of the building, and there are two complete enclosed fire escapes, east and west of it.

The increased plumbing facilities made it possible for men with rehabilitation potential to be housed at Riverslea, so that since late 1981 Riverslea has become a temporary "home" for twenty-six patients, male and female, with a variety of psychiatric diagnoses, and in a variety of age groups, each needing a moderately prolonged period of rehabilitation, or psychiatric halfway housing.

There have been numerous interesting connections to the main Homewood property, going back long before Riverslea and its acres were purchased in 1946. The stone gatehouse at the Arthur Street entrance provided surveillance for Rosehurst, for Riverslea, and in time as the road situation joined that of The Homewood itself, for the "Main Buildings" of The Homewood Sanitarium.

The actual front entrance of The Homewood has always been on the side next to the river, until a few years ago when the Delhi Street entrance was constructed. However, architecturally, the northwest side remains the most spectacular. Thus, it is appropriate that the Lieutenant Governor's visit to Homewood on June 18, 1983, in celebration of Homewood's Centennial plans to follow a route including Riverslea, the Gatehouse (which has housed a series of faithful Homewood employees over the years!) and the stone gates at the end of Arthur Street.

Away back in 1876, James Goldie, Sr., who had been a Liberal but joined the Conservative Party that year, contested the South Wellington seat in the Ontario Parliament, against lawyer Donald Guthrie. Donald Guthrie will be remembered as the owner of "Craiganour", the stone house which in 1883 was purchased by The Homewood Retreat Association, to house the first private hospital for psychiatric patients in Guelph. Donald Guthrie won the election. The Guthrie family, active in the practice of law in the life of Guelph ever since, has been closely allied to the life of Homewood, and today Donald Guthrie's great-grandson, the third Hugh Guthrie, Q.C., a well-known Guelph lawyer, serves on the Board of Directors of Homewood.

Roswell Goldie (Uncle Rom) was a great scrapbook keeper. Perhaps bachelors have the time to do more of that, but his scrapbook, although containing much of great interest in terms of clippings, brochures and programs, is not chronologically arranged, and raises more questions than ever. However, it is entrusted to the Guelph Public Library and can be viewed there upon request of the reference librarian on duty.

Perusal of this scrapbook, and other Goldie material, raises some interesting points. One of these concerns the funeral of Mrs. Frances Owen Goldie, from "Hafod" on January 17, 1908. The Congregational minister performed the ceremony and the funeral and cortege were classified as "huge". Among those present was "Master Alex Goldie, grandson"!

There is a newspaper clipping concerning James Goldie and the "Goldiana fern" or "Aspidium goldianum" as described by his father. There is a photograph of Mr. James Goldie with this fern growing around his feet, but no site is given. There is another photograph of the Goldie fern and orchids at 11 Green Street with the caption, in the writing of Beatrix Tatham, but with no date. Presumably this gardening was done by James Owen Goldie and Roswell Goldie after they moved to 11 Green Street from "Hafod".

Concerning the death of James Goldie, Sr., their father, on Sunday November 3, 1912, and his funeral two days later, the obituary comments that he was "a man of quiet life, simple habits, high ideals, and firm but kindly disposition." This added to the comments Beatrix Tatham made of her memory of "Grandma Goldie" as "a lovely lady, kind to everyone, and loved by all" would indicate that the senior Goldies were greatly prized by their friends and the citizens of Guelph.

Roswell Goldie, "Uncle Rom" lived at 11 Green Street for a long time, and was the second last of his generation to die; he died in May, 1931. His brother, James Owen Goldie, had died in March, 1922. Lincoln Goldie was apparently the last of the five brothers, and was buried from the big Queen Street house on September 19, 1931, with the funeral attended by many people notable in Ontario public life. John Goldie, father of Alex Goldie, and second son of James Goldie, Sr., bought a house at 30 Norwich Street East, into which he moved his family in 1901. He died, presumably there, in 1904. The family lived on in the house until it was sold to the Stewarts (the family of Guelph author Robert Alan Maclean Stewart) in 1913. Alex Goldie went away to World War I in 1914 from this house, as far as he could remember.

During the time that the Halls owned Riverslea, on August 9, 1925 there was the fire in Rosehurst, and it was not inhabitable from that time onward. The Halls had purchased seventeen acres of land when they bought both Rosehurst and Riverslea; James Goldie, Sr., had originally purchased "seventeen acres" of land from the Dr. William Clarke property in 1885. Were these the same seventeen acres? If so, what about the further land Mr. Goldie had purchased from "Clarke and others in trust" in 1887? Which land was it? We read from the report of The Homewood Medical Superintendent for the year 1918, submitted January 9, 1919, to The Homewood Board of Directors: "The old Goldie property of eight acres, now owned by Mr. Hall, containing the Rose Hurst property, together with woodlands adjoining, is on the market for $15,000. An unfortunate feature concerning this is that it is too far away from the present buildings, and would need a separate heating apparatus, as well as a separate kitchen outfit, and it would not be renovated for less than $10,000.

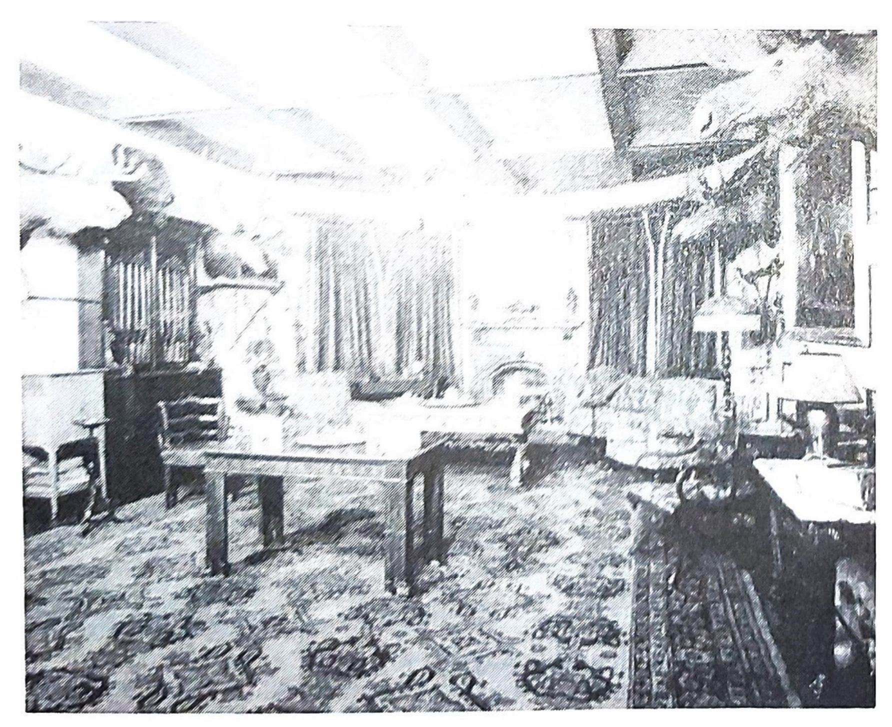
On the west of the institution, near the Bungalow, there are about seven acres of land for sale, part of the late Robert Stewart estate. If we can secure this ($250.00 an acre) it ought to be done at once, as extra land cannot be got within miles of The Homewood ..."

At the time that Rosehurst was pulled down, Laura Secord Clarke, the step-daughter of Dr. Clarke (see the previous description of this relationship) was living in Toronto, and was able to describe her early life in Rosehurst, and vividly recall the hardships of her step-father's medical practice in "the pioneer community of Guelph". Alex Goldie remembered going to "many parties" with his cousins at Rosehurst, and "sleeping over afterward, on a Friday night". He remembered it as a "big old house, with not much very good furniture in it! Life was fairly simple there, with only one servant, at most."

At the time Rosehurst was demolished, and the stone taken to add to Ker Cavan, it was described as having "stark walls, towering fifty feet into the air, mid a setting of tangled undergrowth and giant beech and crumbling piles of masonry ... what remained today of Rosehurst, half a century ago one of Guelph's finest mansions, now in the process of demolition. Within, the man-made ruins still retained something of the era of a "grand seigneur", an aloof and indefinable atmosphere which surrounded the giant pile for nearly seventy years." Ker Cavan was originally built in 1856 by Reverend Palmer, the Rector of St. George's Church, as his private residence on the hill. Thus the stone from Rockwood which was used for the original Ker Cavan, and for Rosehurst, were quarried at approximately the same time. The Rosehurst acreage belongs now to Homewood, since the 1946 purchase of Riverslea.



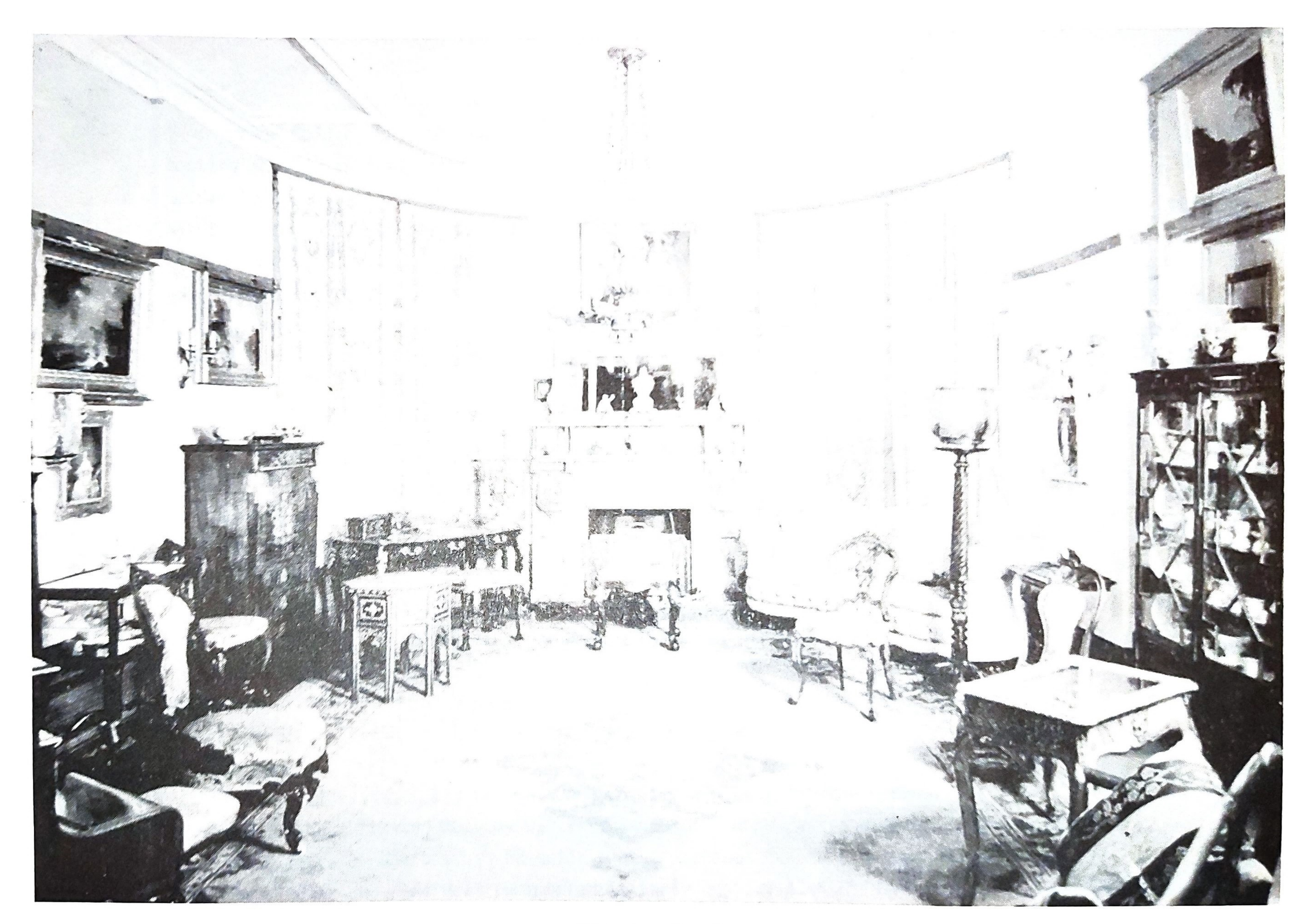
"Reception Hall"



"Men's Room"



The Foyer and other rooms in the era of the Hall family. Note the marble bust of one of the Hall ladies; sculptor, E.H. Bailey, R.A., 1851, who did the Nelson statue in Trafalgar Square.



"Drawing Room"

James Goldie, Sr., may have built Riverslea in a magnificent scale, because a house costing $60,000 in 1891 might be worth $2,000,000 in 1983! It is significant that Alex Goldie told me that "for two or three years after my grandfather's estate was settled after his death, his executors forwarded $10,000 each year to his brother David Goldie in Ayr" so presumably some of the vast spending which James Goldie, Sr., did, may have been using money borrowed from his brother ... on the other hand, David had died in 1894, at a much younger age than James Goldie his brother, and it may simply have been the older brother's way of making sure that the large family of nieces and nephews were provided for!

Alex Goldie describes his grandfather, James Goldie, Sr., as "meticulous, wealthy, hard to work for ... if you did something at his request, and it was not done just right, you had to do it all over again." He gave one example of his grandfather's perfectionism when he said that "all pictures at Riverslea were hung on two wires, not one, and were hung 'just so'". Interesting bits of information are that Leon, son of Thomas Goldie, was so tall and thin, that he was known around Guelph as "String". This would be unlike the figure of many of the Goldies, because although several of them were quite tall, they were usually fairly solidly built. Leon "String" died in 1916 of an infectious illness (? tyhpoid) contracted in World War I. Mr. Jim Goldie believes it may have been contracted on the continent, although Leon died in Manchester, England.

Alex remembers that his father, John Goldie, had attended the Grammar School in Rockwood ... The Rockwood Academy was very famous in those days and later. John Goldie died at 52 years of age but his bachelor brothers, James Owen and Roswell lived on to their late 60's, and were well remembered by their nephew, Alex Goldie.

Frances Owen Goldie was annoyed at the degree of strenuous sports her sons participated in ... John Goldie, Alex's father played football and baseball "down in the town" ... it would appear that Grandma Goldie hated the notoriety, rather than the danger of the sport. John Goldie contracted pneumonia once when playing football and was never really well again, suffering from one chest disease after another. He went to the Gravenhurst Sanitarium, "time and again" during Alex's childhood, and we have to assume that he suffered from tuberculosis. He died in 1904, when Riverslea was only about twelve or thirteen years old. He and his family had lived in the 30 Norwich Street east home since 1901.

Alex's memories of Riverslea in the first two decades of this century, before he went away to World War I, included hot water heating, with radiators supplementing the fireplace heat. He remembers that at least one fireplace was gas burning, from the gas made in the gas-house between Riverslea and the river. "It was from acetylene gas and was used for lighting, cooking, and heating water. There was hot and cold running water in the house right from the first". Beatrix Tatham corroborated this central heating from the era that she went there (prior to and at the time of the turn of the last century).

The Goldie mills were very famous grist mills. The barrels were made by a cooper on flat ground in a building on the Riverslea side of the Speed River, and then by a roped device were passed over the river to the mill on the other side. Flour was sent by train from "Guelph Junction" and went as far away as Australia in the barrels, and more locally in flour bags as well as barrels. As a boy, Alex Goldie helped at the mill, and remembers the labels with the destination of much of the flour. The family tradition of being involved in horticulture became a life work for Alex Goldie after he returned from



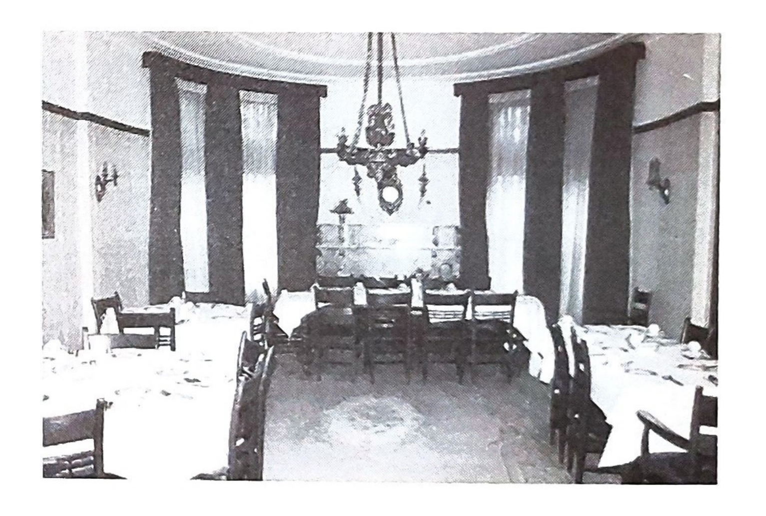
Riverslea when Homewood bought it, 1946.
Note the Halls had changed the arched windows.



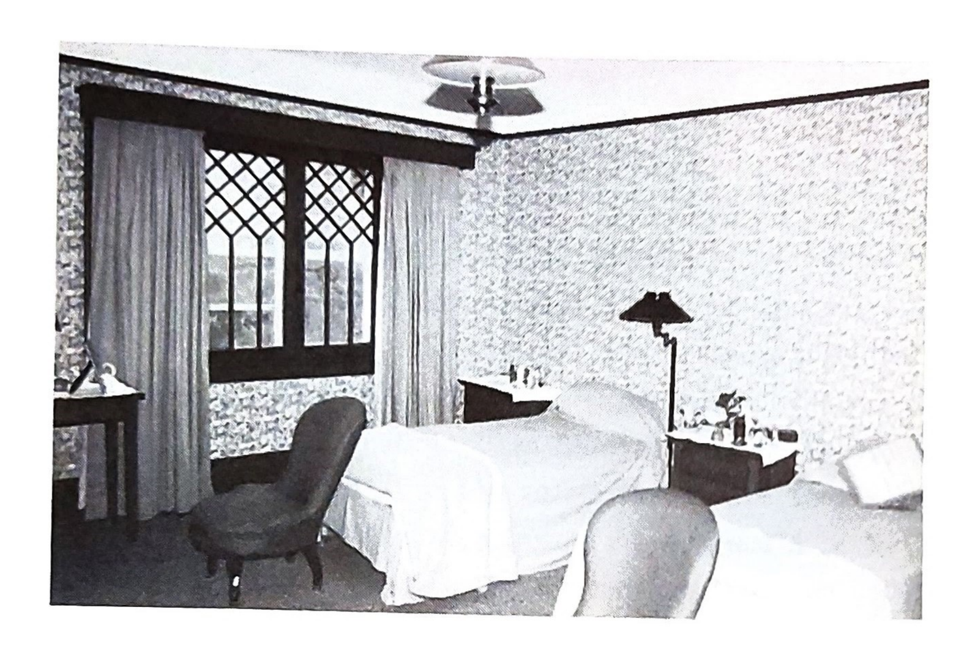
Originally the dining room, this
cosy room is now the main sitting
room behind the foyer.



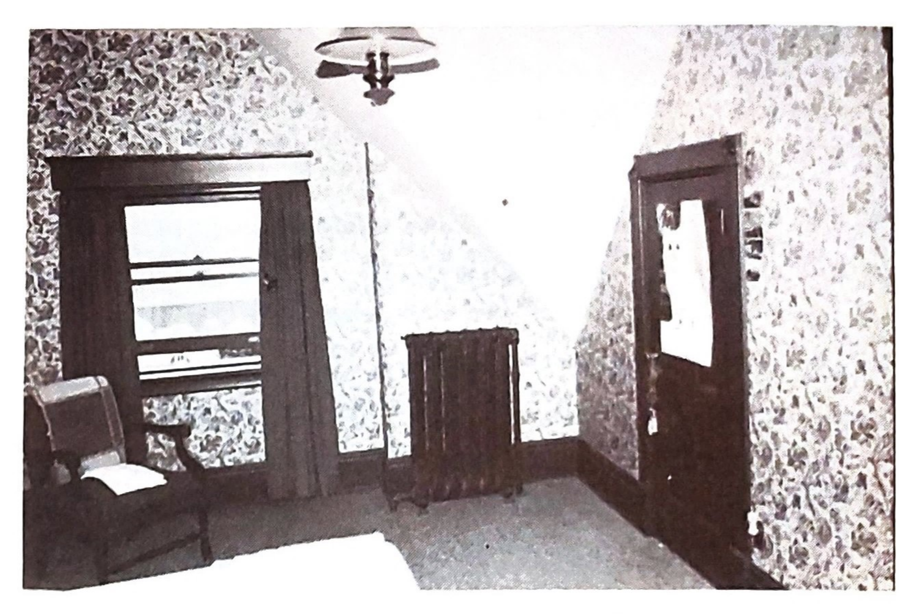
The original mulberry marble
and the stained glass front door.
April, 1983.



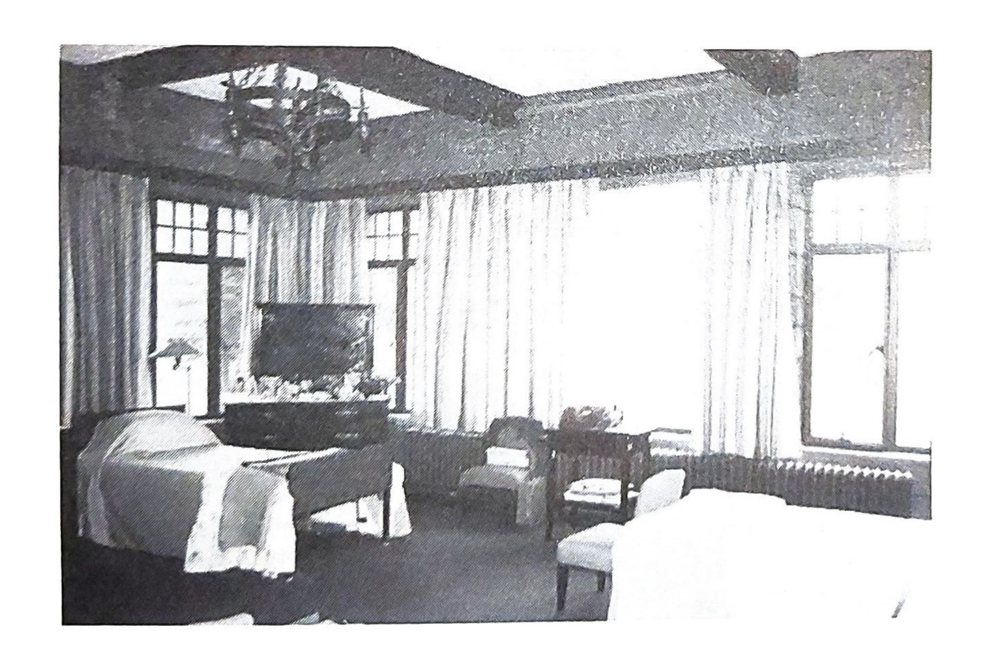
The Goldies' "Drawing Room" is now
the patients' dining room, to the
left of the main entrance hall.
The brass chandelier dates from
the elaborate museum-like era
of the art-collecting Halls.



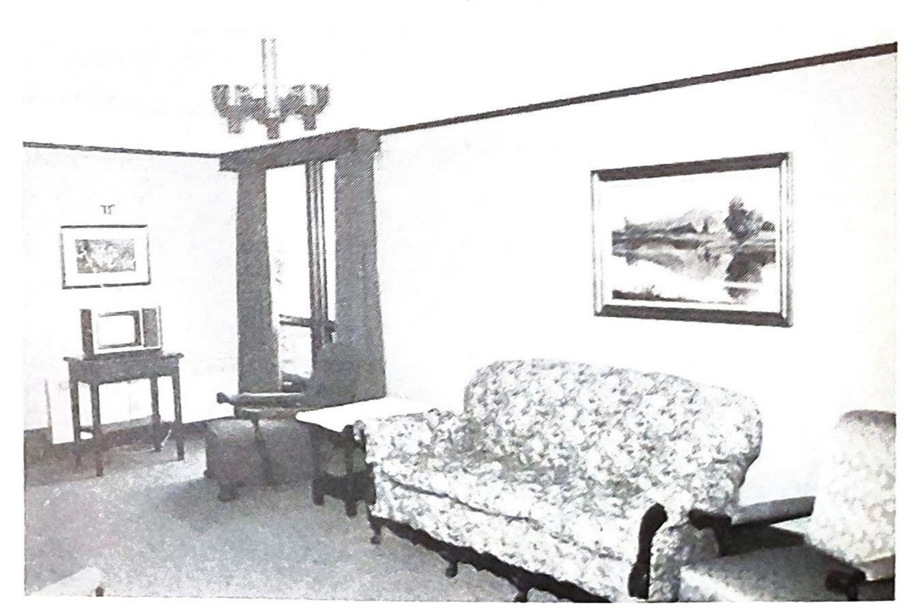
A Third Storey Bedroom



A private bedroom nestles under the eaves of the slate roof. April, 1983.



The Sunroom, a four-bed room, thrusts into the beauty of the trees and lawns.



The 1981-1982 renovations created this calm little living room on the Third Storey, facing east.

World War I. After her death (in February of 1980 in a nursing home near Guelph) Beatrix Tatham's recipe book was found to contain, amongst many other things in her own handwriting, two recipes which she attributed to the Goldie family. One was a recipe for Brownies listed as "Mrs. Goldie's" and dated Guelph, February 9th, 1912 (at which time Mrs. Frances Owen Goldie would be deceased for four years, though it still might be her recipe) and the other for a date loaf listed as "Guelph. M. Goldie, Mrs. W." (the only W. Goldie of appropriate era would be William B. Goldie born in 1887, and one of the sons of John Goldie and therefore an older brother of Alex.) His wife's name was Isabella; what scanty records we have would indicate that they were still in Guelph at this time; later, they moved to Saskatchewan, and in 1922 to California. We do know that Alex Goldie said that in 1918, after he returned from the War, his brother Will (who at one point worked in a business office at the University of Guelph, but also had a hardware business) convinced him to invest his savings and join him in the hardware venture. Alex told us "there was not enough business for two, and I lost my shirt", and so he then went West to study farming at the Olds Alberta, Agricultural College.

Just in case the Brownies' recipe was that of Mrs. Frances Owen Goldie, it is listed here for anyone interested.

BROWNIES (Mrs. Goldie's)

2½ cups Graham flour
2½ cups white flour
2 cups brown sugar
½ cup lard
½ cup butter
2 eggs
2 tablespoons of sour milk

2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon soda

Filling: 2 cups dates
1½ cups water
1½ cups brown sugar

Presumably, every cook who read this recipe was expected to know exactly what to do with these ingredients!

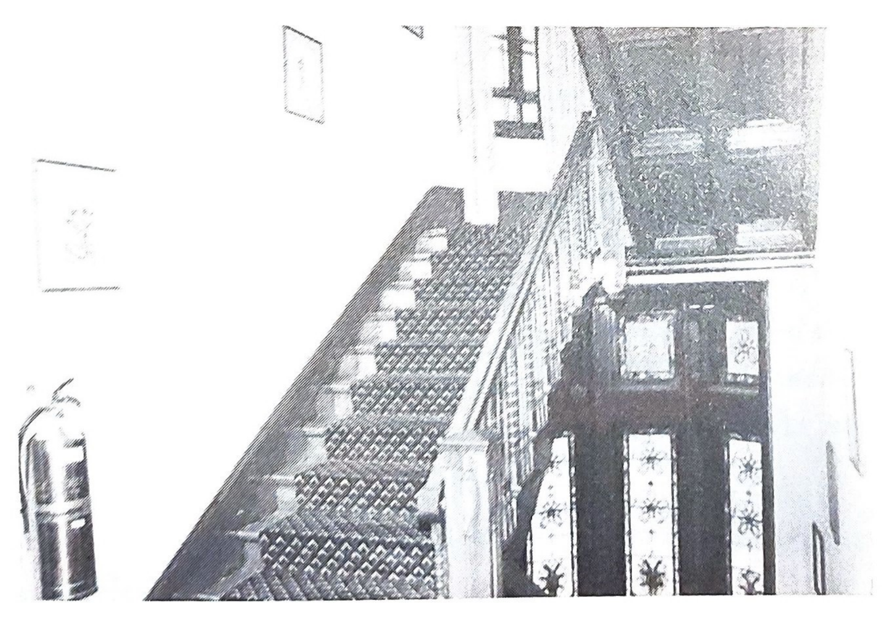
Interestingly, the date loaf contained Graham flour, white flour, sour milk, brown sugar, milk and butter, dates, soda, and salt, in varying proportions ... so that the cook could use the same cupboards to make both recipes!

One eulogy of Mrs. Frances Owen Goldie described her as "known for her independent spirit and strong, inspiring character. Evidence of this (is) shown by (the) large number of nieces, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters bearing her name. Five sons were a credit to her strict Christian upbringing. All were successful in the business field and two brought added distinction to the family in the political arena."

These then were the outstanding people who first lived in the great and beautiful redstone house by the Speed River. We know almost nothing of the era of the Hall family in Riverslea ... it is almost as if that were an interlude, while the strong, kindly spirits of the Goldies waited for The Homewood folk to come to dwell in their house, to return it to its role as a "home" rather than a museum!



The "Quiet Room" outside the
Nursing Station, is beautified
by Evan MacDonald paintings,
an aquarium, and birds.



Up the Stairs to the
Second Storey



This little book was inspired by a lot of people, and by the house itself, "Riverslea". However, we received invaluable aid from Ted Carter, Co-ordinator Illustration Services, of the University of Guelph, from George and Noreen Smith of the Homewood staff, and from the following members of the Goldie family: James L. Goldie of Guelph; Mrs. Marjorie Goldie of Barrie, Ontario; David Kilgour of Toronto; Mrs. Frances R. Kirsch of Maryland; Alex and Virginia Goldie of California.

We would like to thank Elsie Fleming and Margaret Fehr for their technical help, and Bill Petras and Joan Reeve of the Gore Mutual Insurance Company of Cambridge for their co-operation in tracing Goldie family portraits.

John Brothers, Co-ordinator of the Homewood Centennial was an unfailing support in all ways; and, as in every aspect of the remainder of that Centennial Celebration, Mr. William E. Hamilton, President of The Homewood Corporation, and Dr. Merville O. Vincent, Executive Director of The Homewood Sanitarium, have gone immeasurably beyond the "call of duty" in backing us in all efforts to make the Riverslea booklet, and the permanent collection of Goldie-Riverslea memorabilia a treasure of fact and nostalgia for all interested people of today and tomorrow.

We have attempted to substantiate every fragment of this document completely, and we believe that it is as totally accurate as we can make it at the time of writing. Therefore, we do not hesitate to agree that it may be used for library and reference purposes without concern regarding its veracity.

We are grateful to Hugh Guthrie, Q.C., for his legal research. Rod Berry's magnificent line drawings inspired the front and back covers; the originals, when framed, will hang on the walls of the "Goldie Room" at Riverslea.

If the reader feels at this point that Riverslea has become much more alive to us than a house usually can be, that is true!

Guelph, Ontario
May, 1983

M. Ruth Tatham, M.D.
"Unit Director" of the Ward
which we of Homewood call
"Riverslea"

